

Don't Let Newsom's 'Science' Statements Fool You

California Gov. Gavin Newsom labeled churches as “nonessential” in his startlingly alarmist edict of March 19, 2020, while arbitrarily deeming liquor stores, marijuana dispensaries, Costcos and Walmarts “essential.”

Equally high-handedly as off-handedly pronouncing that “56% of Californians—25.5 million people—could be infected with coronavirus in the next two months,” Newsom stated emphatically, “We are going to do the right thing, not judge by politics, not judge by protests, but by science.”

He evidently meant “political pseudo-science” as his reckless and vainglorious swagger into medical territory turned out to be off by no less than 98%.

No one will mistake Gov. Newsom's foolhardy and absurdist stance in the name of science for rational wisdom or insightful foresight, but what is most objectionable about it is that such pseudo-science masquerades as genuine science.

Along with other blue state governors, Gov. Newsom's dictates are a deplorable example of the devastating cultural and economical impact of health scare policies based on fallacies and factually baseless or scientifically unfounded claims.

To paraphrase 1 Samuel 17:26, we may ask: Who is this Philistine giant that he should defy the armies of the living God?

There is a thin line between compliance—the tendency of conforming with or agreeing to the commands/demands of others—and complicity, particularly when they are unjust or unjustified.

According to Daniel Dreisbach, “No question on the minds of pious Americans in the midst of a growing conflict with Great Britain”—and one could argue in the midst of the current conflict between secularism and Christianity—“was more pressing or difficult than this: ‘Do citizens ever have a right or even a duty to resist an unjust, tyrannical ruler?’ Does a civil magistrate who disregards the divinely ordained responsibilities of the office, to restate the question from the ruler’s perspective, forfeit the office and, thereby, the citizen’s duty to obey?”

The biblical texts most often cited as seemingly supporting the doctrines of compliance, unlimited submission or passive obedience and nonresistance are Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17.

The self-evident caveat in these passages is that the “governing authorities” must rule in accordance with God’s law. They must uphold divine law, protect the good and destroy the bad. Rulers who violate the law of God or whose commands are contrary to God’s law should be resisted.

Far from consenting that Romans 13:1-7 compels unlimited submission to civil authorities, congregational minister Jonathan Mayhew (1720-1766) argued that Scripture only instructs obedience to “a reasonable and just authority”—those rulers who serve the public good and fulfill the divine design of civil government.

In the words of Mayhew: “No civil rulers are to be obeyed when they enjoin things that are inconsistent with the commands of God. ... All commands running counter to the declared will of the supreme legislator of heaven and earth are null and void. And therefore disobedience to them is a duty, not a crime.”

The French theologian, pastor and reformer John Calvin (1509-1564) justified defying civil rulers when obedience to the rulers compels disobedience to God. He considered those

rulers to “spoil God of His right and as it were to occupy His throne.”

The New Hampshire Constitution of 1784 expressed it thus: “The doctrine of nonresistance against arbitrary power, and oppression, is absurd, slavish and destructive of the good and happiness of mankind.”

“For it is the will of God that by doing right you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Pet. 2:15).

This is in line with Acts 5:29, where it says, “We must obey God rather than men.”

In Matthew 22:21b, Jesus says “Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s.”

The biblically based political concepts that became central to the American system of constitutional government included the supremacy of higher law; law as the embodiment of reason, free from human passions; the divine source of inalienable rights; the contractual basis and, thus, *limited* character of civil government; the consent of the governed as the basis of legitimate civil authority; and the right of resistance against tyrannical, unjust rulers.

Pastor Rob McCoy (former Thousand Oaks mayor and city councilman) sent a clarion call to pastors at the *Nonessential* premiere on Oct. 18: Open California churches and put in check “tyrannical officials who have ruined our economy, closed our schools, divided our people between essential and nonessential and declared our churches as nonessential.”

Gideons and Rahabs are beginning to stand. {eoa}

David Lane is the founder of the American Renewal Project.